

GORDON BAY PROVINCIAL PARK
MASTER
PLAN

November, 1995

Southern Vancouver Island District

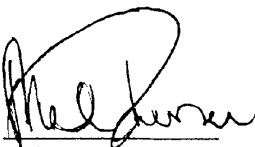
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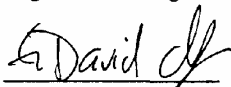
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GORDON BAY PROVINCIAL PARK

MASTER PLAN

NOVEMBER, 1995

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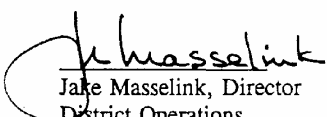
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PLAN HIGHLIGHTS

Gordon Bay Provincial Park is almost fully developed. With the exception of a proposed group campsite, no additional campsites are recommended as the beach area is already near capacity. Redesign of existing facilities will enhance future park users visits. Separating the day users from campers by providing a new access to the campground will eliminate congestion at the park entrance and assist in the overall management of the park.

Additions to the existing park of adjacent crown and private lands are recommended for new park access road, alternate recreation purposes and visual aesthetics. The addition of Provincial forestland and crown land situated across Cowichan Lake from the park would protect this area from future resource development, enhance existing recreation opportunities and provide an uninterrupted viewscape.

A Vegetation Management Plan will be developed to ensure adequate protection and management of the parks' sensitive and interesting floral environment.

Honeymoon Bay Ecological Reserve, located near the park, is very popular in the spring due to its showy wildflower displays. A management plan for this reserve is required. This plan will address such issues as its role/designation, overuse, development, promotion and plant manipulation. Adding the reserve to Gordon Bay Provincial Park and establishing another wildflower eco-reserve nearby are possible options.

It is recommended that the Cowichan Valley Regional District (CVRD) develop a recreation management plan for the Cowichan Lake area. BC Parks would work closely with the CVRD and other agencies including local representatives of Electoral Area F, provincial ministries and private agencies to ensure that readily accessible, properly designed and operated recreation facilities are maintained and enhanced in this region. In addition, the new provincial park established on the Cowichan River should be considered for possible future camping opportunities.

The provision of scenic viewing areas and hiking trails along with improved beach foreshore for boaters will add to the enjoyment for park visitors. The existing sanistation must be upgraded within the park or relocated to another site in the Cowichan Valley.

A. What is a Master Plan?

A master plan is an administrative manual which guides a park's management for a five to ten year term. It sets out objectives and actions for conservation, development, interpretation and operation of a park. A master plan relies on current information relating to park resources, recreation uses and activities occurring on surrounding lands. This information is available from park managers, discussions with other government agencies, previously prepared reports, public interest groups, study teams, consultants and from the general public.

Master plans establish long-term management direction for a park and also may deal with immediate issues. This means that the plan will generally contain numerous statements describing management actions that need various degrees of attention. Since BC Parks cannot carry out every task at the same time, the plan must also prioritize the management actions.

Public input into this plan has been through local community involvement, discussions with other agencies including the Cowichan Valley Regional District and Ministry of Forests and review of the this draft master plan.

B. Plan Purpose

The purpose of this master plan is to provide long term guidance for the management and development of Gordon Bay Provincial Park. BC Parks' aim is to protect and preserve the natural features associated with this park while providing a variety of recreation opportunities for the enjoyment of local and destination-oriented visitors.

C. Key Issues

The master plan addresses several management and planning issues:

1. Park Boundaries;

Gordon Bay Provincial Park is relatively small containing only 49 hectares of forested upland adjacent to Cowichan Lake. The addition of contiguous private and crown lands for scenic backdrops, conservation and recreation values are identified and discussions with existing owners on possible exchanges or acquisition is recommended. A review of the role and boundaries of Honeymoon Bay Ecological Reserve which lies adjacent to the park will also be addressed as part of this issue.

2. Facility Development:

The park is almost fully developed with the exception of a proposed group campground. Only

changes which are of a site design nature (ie. park access, day use area beach expansion, signage, playground and group camping) are proposed. No expansion of the existing campground is recommended and additional camping opportunities may be provided at alternative locations such as Cowichan River Provincial Park, Forest Service Recreation sites and private campgrounds.

3. Resource Management:

It is recommended that a vegetation management plan be undertaken in conjunction with an inventory of the plant and animal species associated with the park. Continued liaison between District staff and resource people from other ministries, local governments, area residents and Cowichan First Nations will be encouraged. Honeymoon Bay Ecological Reserve will also be considered when the vegetation management plan is prepared for the park if a management plan has not been completed for the reserve.

D. Background Summary

Gordon Bay Provincial Park is located 35 kilometres west of Duncan on the west side of Cowichan Lake. Established as a Class A Provincial Park on September 19, 1969, this popular destination-oriented park contains 49 hectares and has both a developed campground and day use area. Found in the Leeward Island Mountains Eco-section, most of the park is second growth forest containing a good mix of common vascular plants, mosses, lichen and fungi. Large mammals such as Black bear, Roosevelt elk, Columbian Blacktail deer, beaver, raccoon and cougar also frequent the park. Mollusca amphibians, fish, reptiles, small mammals and a variety of birds are commonly seen and interpreted to appreciative park audiences during summer interpretation programs.

Immediately adjacent to the park is Honeymoon Bay Ecological Reserve, located along Sutton Creek on the opposite side of South Shore Road. This ecological reserve of approximately 7.5 hectares contains a large population of the pink fawn lily and supports seral coniferous forest stands in which western hemlock, western red cedar and Douglas fir are present. A variety of wildflowers and several species of ferns are well represented in this reserve.

Gordon Bay Provincial Park is extremely popular in the summer months and the campground is constantly in an overflow situation. The day use beach area is also heavily used by both area residents, lake boaters and park campers. Approximately 40000 campers and 75000 day users enjoyed Gordon Bay Provincial Park in 1994. Park facilities include a 130 unit campground, boat launch, sanitation, playground, amphitheatre, developed sandy beach, short hiking trail, change house and toilet buildings. These facilities are mainly designed to accommodate front-country summer recreation opportunities for camping, picnicking, day use activities, boating, fishing and nature appreciation.

A. Regional and Provincial Context

Gordon Bay Provincial Park is situated on the southwest side of Cowichan Lake, 35 kilometres northwest of Duncan via Highway 18 turnoff (Figure 1). Established as a Class A Provincial Park under the *Park Act*, this park provides regional recreation opportunities and acts as a base for outdoor enthusiasts visiting the Carmanah and Cowichan Valley areas. Gordon Bay is located in the Cowichan Valley basin and enjoys dry, hot summers and mild, wet winters common to southern Vancouver Island.

Honeymoon Bay, Lake Cowichan and Youbou are small settlement areas accessed by Highway 18. Primarily forest harvesting communities, this area is currently undertaking changes in settlement and socio-economic patterns towards more tourist and retirement based growth.

B. Role of Park

B.1 CONSERVATION ROLE

In keeping with the goals of the provincial park system (**Appendix A**), the main conservation role of Gordon Bay Provincial Park is to contribute towards the representation of the regional landscape of the **Leeward Island Mountains Ecosection**. Found within the Coastal Western Hemlock biogeoclimatic zone, the park is comprised of second growth forest containing a good mix of common vascular plants, mosses,

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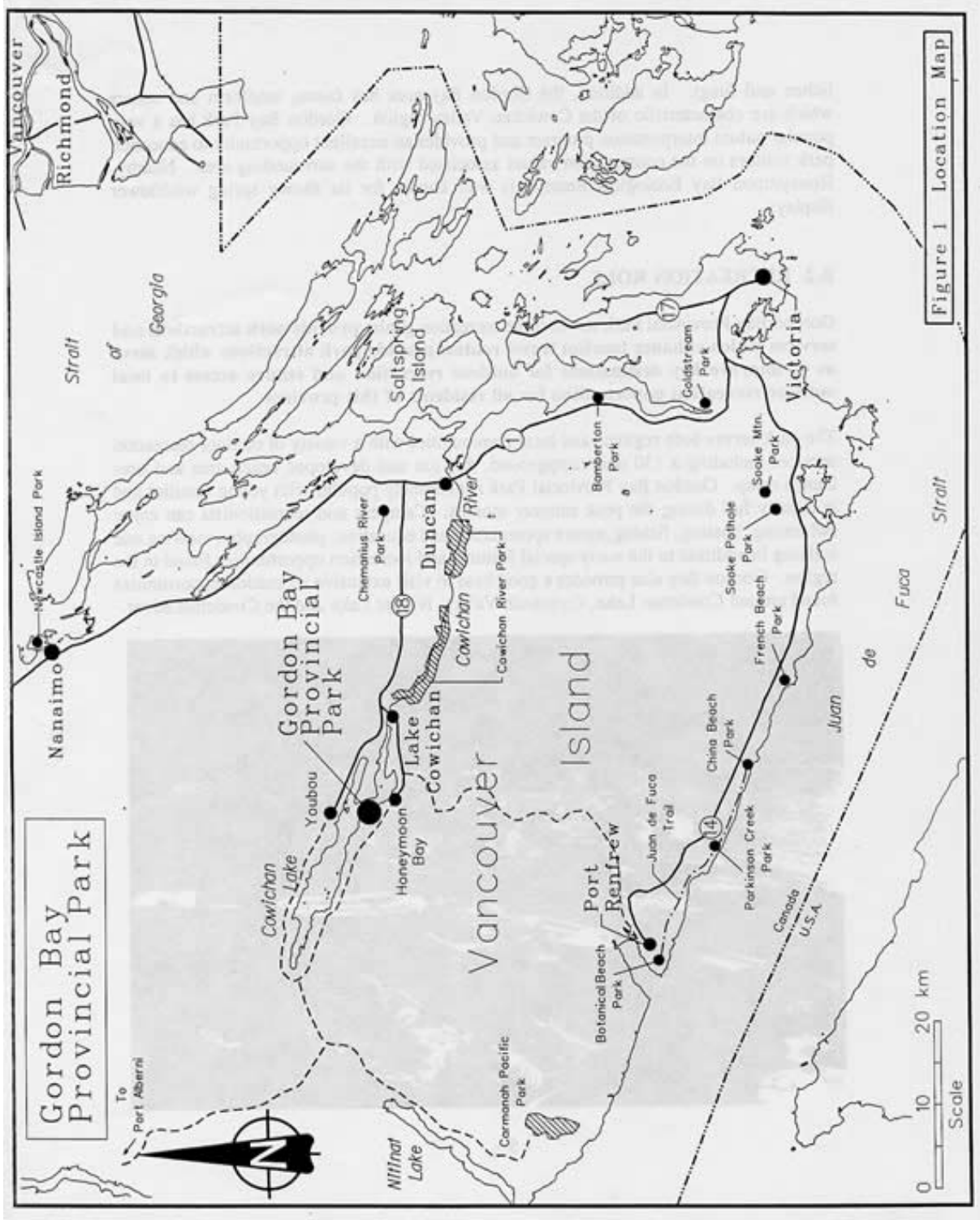


Figure 1 Location Map

lichen and fungi. In addition, the Gordon Bay area has fauna, landform and waters which are characteristic of the Cowichan Valley region. Gordon Bay Park has a very popular nature interpretation program and provides an excellent opportunity to education park visitors on the conservation values associated with the surrounding area. Nearby, Honeymoon Bay Ecological Reserve is well known for its showy spring wildflower displays.

B.2 RECREATION ROLE

Gordon Bay Provincial Park serves three recreation goals: **provide park attractions and services which enhance tourism travel routes; provide park attractions which serve as or improve key destinations for outdoor recreation and ensure access to local outdoor recreation opportunities for all residents of this province.**

The park serves both regional and local communities with a variety of outdoor recreation services including a 130 unit campground, day use and developed beach area and boat launch ramp. Gordon Bay Provincial Park is extremely popular with young families and is usually full during the peak summer months. Campers and recreationists can enjoy swimming, boating, fishing, nature appreciation and education, photography, viewing and walking in addition to the many special features and recreation opportunities found in the region. Gordon Bay also provides a good base to visit extensive recreation opportunities found around Cowichan Lake, Carmanah Valley, Nitinat Lake and the Cowichan River.

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C. Vision Statement

A vision statement for Gordon Bay Provincial Park has been developed which looks forward to the next decade and sets a tone for how the park may differ from what it is today. Being clear about the long-term vision helps guide what should be done in the short-term. The vision statement is an important guide for reacting to changing demands for recreation or incorporating new approaches to conservation management. The development of priorities for new management initiatives will be directed by this statement.

C.1 A Vision for Conservation

By the year 2005, it is anticipated that the area identified to the west and north of Gordon Bay Provincial Park will be either added to the park or managed for forestry, wildlife, recreation, roads and other types of land uses. The lands identified across the lake surrounding Bald Mountain will be managed to protect the area's visual resources and left in a relatively undisturbed environment. The park is part of the Leeward Island Mountains Ecoregion where integrated management of these lands and cooperation between government resource agencies, regional/local government and private industries are a priority.

C.2 A Vision for Recreation

By the year 2005, Gordon Bay Provincial Park will continue to play an important role on Southern Vancouver Island in providing people with a variety of opportunities for experiencing recreation and nature activities. The park will continue to serve the local population and remain a recreation holiday destination reached along a major tourism travel route (Highway #18). A number of family-oriented outdoor activities such as camping, picnicking, group camping, fishing, swimming, boating, viewing, hiking and nature appreciation will be provided enhance the recreation opportunities associated with this park. Education on the park's natural and cultural resources through a well developed interpretive program will also add to the enjoyment of the park visitor's experience.

Due to park's small size and close proximity to urban centres, the frontcountry is well developed and will continue to serve as an important staging area for other recreation opportunities found Cowichan/Nitinat/Carmanah Valley region.

Introduction:

Zoning is a tool that is used in park planning to allocate general management guidelines to areas of a park on a geographical basis. At one end of the spectrum, the Intensive Recreation Zone indicates a portion of the park that is appropriate for high levels of recreation and facility development. At the other end is the Natural Environment Zone which allows for minimal facility development in a relatively natural setting. Gordon Bay Provincial Park, containing over 49 hectares, is divided into three zones: the Intensive Recreation Zone, the Natural Environment Zone and the Special Feature Zone (Figure 2).

i. Intensive Recreation Zone

The management objective of this zone is to provide for a variety of high-use, readily-accessible visitor services and facilities. The largest of the park's zones and comprising over 35 hectares, the intensive recreation zone contains at present a 130 unit campground, developed day use beach area, boat launch, sanistation, parking lots, gatehouse, amphitheatre, and service yard.

ii. Natural Environment Zone

Most of the remaining 14 hectares in Gordon Bay Provincial Park falls into this zone. The management objective of the Natural Environment Zone is to provide easily-accessible outdoor recreation activities in a largely undisturbed natural environment. This zone acts mainly as a buffer between the park's existing boundary and the intensive recreation zone where hiking trails and viewing sites to observe the park's natural features are found.

iii. Special Feature Zone

The management objective of the Special Feature Zone is to protect and present significant natural and cultural resources, features and processes because of their special character, fragility and heritage value. The shoreline and adjacent upland extending from the developed beach area west has some unique and fragile plant species. Recognition of this 2 hectare area and the small island that can be reached by foot when the lake level is low, is important. The sensitive moss and grass covered shoreline slopes have brightly coloured displays of spring flowers and a rare Rocky Mountain juniper overlooking the bay adds to the uniqueness of the area.

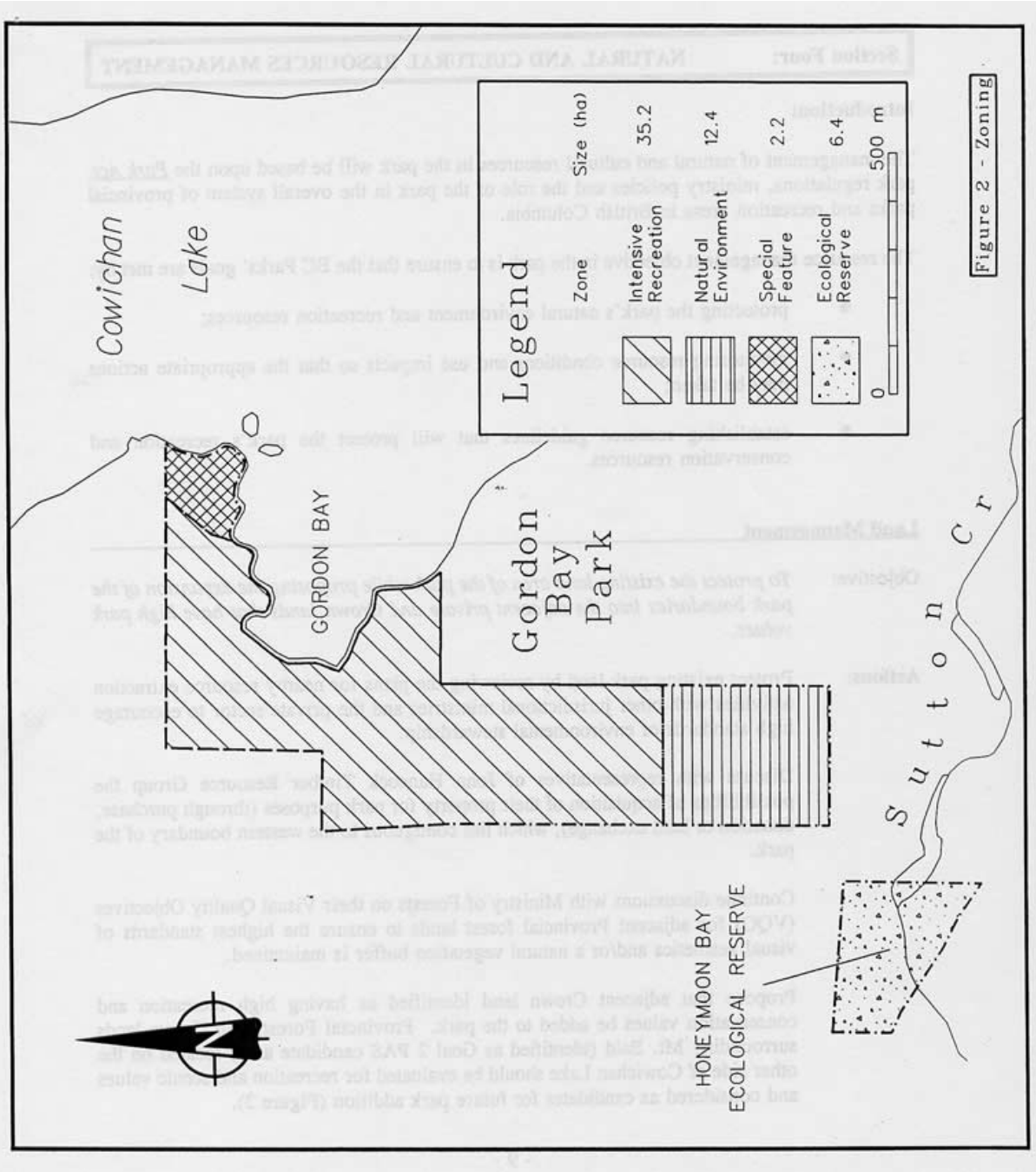


Figure 2 - Zoning

Section Four:	NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES MANAGEMENT
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Introduction:

The management of natural and cultural resources in the park will be based upon the *Park Act*, park regulations, ministry policies and the role of the park in the overall system of provincial parks and recreation areas in British Columbia.

The resource management objective in the park is to ensure that the BC Parks' goals are met by:

- protecting the park's natural environment and recreation resources;
- monitoring resource conditions and use impacts so that the appropriate actions may be taken;
- establishing resource guidelines that will protect the park's recreation and conservation resources.

Land Management

Objective: *To protect the existing land area of the park while proposing the expansion of the park boundaries into the adjacent private and Crown lands that have high park values.*

Actions: Protect existing park land by reviewing the plans for nearby resource extraction activities with other jurisdictional ministries and the private sector to encourage high standards of environmental stewardship.

Discuss with representatives of John Hancock Timber Resource Group the possibilities of acquisition of their property for park purposes (through purchase, donation or land exchange), which lies contiguous to the western boundary of the park.

Continue discussions with Ministry of Forests on their Visual Quality Objectives (VQO) for adjacent Provincial forest lands to ensure the highest standards of visual aesthetics and/or a natural vegetation buffer is maintained.

Propose that adjacent Crown land identified as having high recreation and conservation values be added to the park. Provincial Forests and Crown lands surrounding Mt. Bald (identified as Goal 2 PAS candidate area) located on the other side of Cowichan Lake should be evaluated for recreation and scenic values and considered as candidates for future park addition (Figure 3).

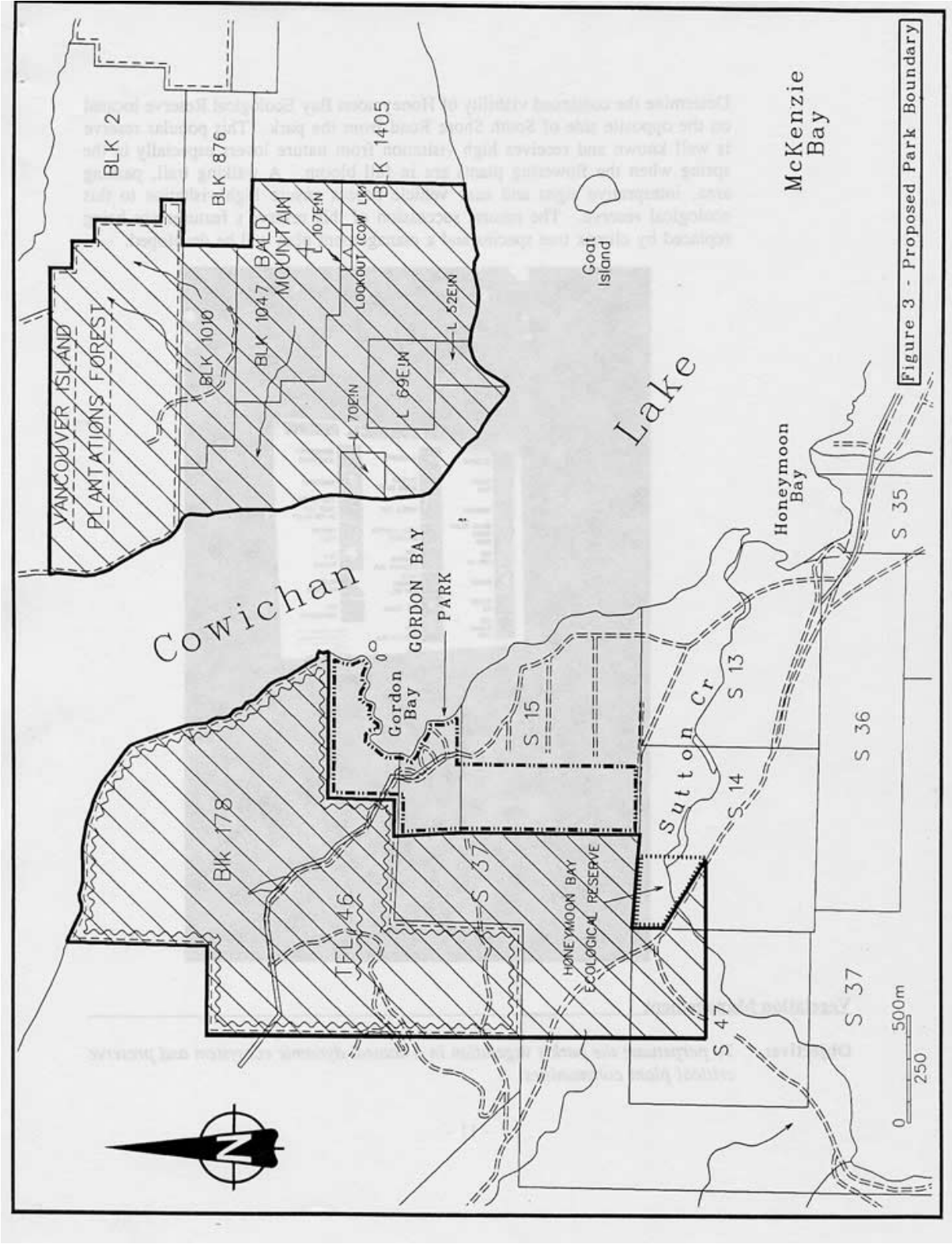


Figure 3 - Proposed Park Boundary

Determine the continued viability of Honeymoon Bay Ecological Reserve located on the opposite side of South Shore Road from the park. This popular reserve is well known and receives high visitation from nature lovers especially in the spring when the flowering plants are in full bloom. A walking trail, parking area, interpretive signs and easy vehicle access ensure high visitation to this ecological reserve. The natural succession of this reserve's features are being replaced by climax tree species and a management plan will be developed.

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Vegetation Management

Objective: *To perpetuate the park's vegetation in a natural dynamic ecosystem and preserve critical plant communities.*

Actions: Prepare a vegetation management plan for the park and undertake an inventory of the more unusual plant species especially located in the Special Features Zone.

Implement a revegetation program as part of the vegetation management plan to replace dead and diseased trees.

PHOTOGRAPH NOT AVAILABLE

Water Management

Objective: *To maintain stream and lake water quality in a high standard free from any contaminants or pollution to benefit park visitors, area residents, plants and animals.*

Actions: Ensure that all sanitary facilities are properly designed, located and monitored. The existing sanistation needs to be either upgraded or relocated in order to ensure provincial health standards are adequately met.

Check quality of campground water supply once per month.

Provide public with information on park water conservation ethics.

Ensure that contaminants do not enter any streams in the park.

Wildlife Management

Objective: *To maintain the park's existing natural biotic diversity of wildlife species and genetics.*

Actions: Formulate a wildlife inventory and management plan with input from other government agencies and the local community.

Continue the existing policy of no hunting in the park.

Visual Resource Management

Objective: *To ensure the viewing opportunities from within the park are maintained and enhanced.*

Actions: Meet with Ministry of Forests to implement Visual Quality Objectives for visually sensitive areas near or across the lake from the park for those areas not recommended for park acquisition but visible from the park. As well as having high visual values, these areas would provide park users additional hiking, viewing and nature appreciation opportunities.

Provide new viewing sites and access trails to higher elevation vantage points should lands be acquired immediately to the northwest of the existing park boundary.

Seek to acquire additional surrounding lands and those properties across the lake from the park which reflect the park's visual resource objectives through acquisition or other forms of protected area planning.

Cultural Resource Management

Objective: *To identify, present and protect significant cultural features of the park.*

Actions: In cooperation with Heritage Conservation Branch undertake a heritage inventory of the park including archaeological sites, old mines, logging history and other cultural features.

Define, in conjunction with First Nations, traditional activities in the area.

Discuss with First Nations in Lake Cowichan and Duncan ways of presenting the native history of the Cowichan Lake and Valley region as part of the park's interpretive program.

Outdoor Recreation Features

Objective: *To ensure that recreation, promotion, development and use are compatible with outdoor recreation features and in keeping with conservation objectives for the park's resources.*

Actions: Manage recreation use in conjunction with the park's zoning plan so that outdoor recreation features and natural resources will be minimally affected.

Recommend that a Recreation Management Plan be initiated by Cowichan Valley Regional District for the Cowichan Lake area with participation by private forest companies, Ministry of Forests, BC Parks, CVRD etc.

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Relationship with First Nations

First Nations people have been using the park area since before the arrival of Europeans. BC Parks has limited information on the values of the features and resources in the area as they pertain to First Nations' culture and heritage.

Objective: *To develop on-going communication and working relationships with First Nations people whose territory cover the park.*

Actions: Define, in conjunction with First Nations, traditional activities in the Cowichan Lake and Valley areas.

Discuss with First Nations in Lake Cowichan and Duncan methods and appropriate ways in presenting native history of the Cowichan region, as part of BC Parks interpretive program, to park visitors.

Consult relevant First Nations representatives about proposed additions to Gordon Bay Provincial Park.

Introduction:

Gordon Bay Provincial Park is a small destination family-oriented park providing camping, day use and water sport opportunities (Figure 4). Park users are attracted to this park not only for its recreational features but also its natural resources and scenic values. Most of the recreational activities focus on Cowichan Lake and include swimming, fishing, powerboating, water skiing, sailboarding, sunbathing and canoeing.

Visitor services at Gordon Bay accommodate a wide spectrum of park users and range from intensive use facilities to nature viewing and hiking.

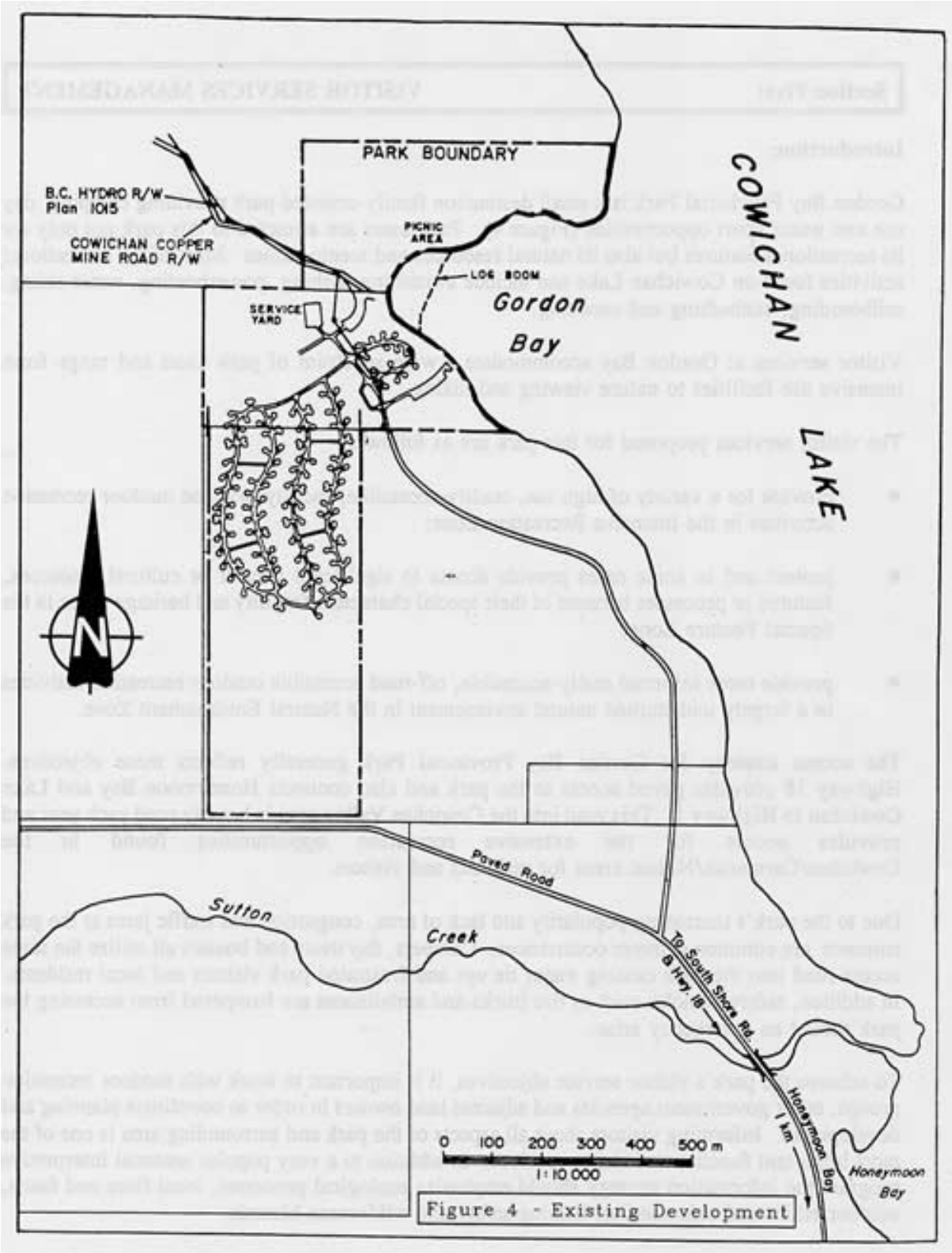
The visitor services proposed for this park are as follows:

- provide for a variety of high use, readily-accessible, facility-oriented outdoor recreation activities in the Intensive Recreation Zone;
- protect and in some cases provide access to significant natural or cultural resources, features or processes because of their special character, fragility and heritage value in the Special Feature Zone;
- provide more informal easily-accessible, off-road accessible outdoor recreation activities in a largely undisturbed natural environment in the Natural Environment Zone.

The access strategy for Gordon Bay Provincial Park generally reflects these objectives. Highway 18 provides paved access to the park and also connects Honeymoon Bay and Lake Cowichan to Highway 1. This road into the Cowichan Valley area is heavily used each year and provides access for the extensive recreation opportunities found in the Cowichan/Carmanah/Nitinat areas for residents and visitors.

Due to the park's increasing popularity and lack of area, congestion and traffic jams at the park entrance are common summer occurrences. Campers, day users and boaters all utilize the same access road into the park causing major tie ups and frustrated park visitors and local residents. In addition, safety vehicles such as fire trucks and ambulances are hampered from accessing the park should an emergency arise.

To achieve the park's visitor service objectives, it is important to work with outdoor recreation groups, other government agencies and adjacent land owners in order to coordinate planning and development. Informing visitors about all aspects of the park and surrounding area is one of the most important functions of visitor services. In addition to a very popular seasonal interpretive program the information strategy should emphasize ecological processes, local flora and fauna, outdoor ethics and orienteering, boating safety and wilderness hazards.



OUTDOOR RECREATION OPPORTUNITIES

The following summary outlines each activity, its objective and the facilities or services required associated with the park.

Day Use

Objective: *To offer a wide range of day use opportunities including both water and land based activities.*

Actions: Bring in additional sand to expand and improve existing beach area.

Brush out shoreline vegetation to increase beach area for boaters while at the same time minimizing any disturbance to fish habitat.

Review beach site plan to possibly remove excess facilities (tables, toilets, wood corrals etc.) and add complementary facilities such as a playground, meeting place and amphitheatre. Visitor comment sheets have continually stated that there needs to be more activities and varied facilities developed in the park.

Improve physically challenged access (hard trail surfaces) to picnic area and lake shore and ensure park facilities meet disabled park user standards.

PHOTOGRAPH NOT AVAILABLE

Develop a signage plan to ensure visitors with appropriate and updated safety and updated park information messages (ie. swimmer's itch, plant identification etc.).

Redesign and enhance day use parking lot to improve efficiency, increase capacity and address water drainage problems.

Develop additional hiking/walking trails and complete the Point Trail. Trail access to a viewing area on the hillside above the day use area is recommended.

Add exterior cold water showers in the day use area for swimmers.

Meet with John Hancock Timber Resource Group and Ministry of Forests to provide multi-use trails on private and crown lands adjacent to the park.

Fishing

Objective: *To provide a high quality lake fishing recreational experience.*

Actions: Provide an information board near the boat launch to inform visitors about fishing regulations, water safety, boating etiquette, local boat rentals and other fishing-related information.

Promote fish/lake conservation and work with Fish and Wildlife Branch to enhance stream and lake fish habitat.

Erect signage near streams in the park promoting conservation and creek enhancement.

Boating

Objective: *To provide a variety of safe boating opportunities on Cowichan Lake.*

Actions: Provide safe boating literature on the information board near the boat launch.

Provide information on other destination boating areas including the establishment of several provincial marine parks in Cowichan Lake and any zoning or speed restriction information.

Enhance the operation of the existing boat launch by extending the concrete ramp farther into the lake to replace the portion that fell away and construct a small floating wharf attached to one side of the ramp.

Provide a "boater's beach" and enhanced landing area for small power boats and canoes, east of the existing boat launch.

Camping

Objective: *To improve the quality and variety of existing camping opportunities.*

Actions: Design a group campsite within the Intensive Recreation Zone to accommodate the increased demand for group camping facilities. This group site would require a picnic shelter, grass tenting area, pit toilets and/or toilet building and play area.

Review existing campground layout and determine whether a few campsites in the first loop should be relocated in order to increase the beach and day use area.

Explore opportunities to design an informal camping/tenting area in the park.

Provide alternate access for both the day use area and campground. This would help to eliminate vehicle congestion and improve access for emergency vehicles. The existing access would be for pedestrian or emergency vehicle use only.

PHOTOGRAPH NOT AVAILABLE

Outdoor Education

Objective: *To encourage outdoor education in the park and surrounding area so as to enhance the public's understanding and appreciation of the special natural and cultural features associated with Cowichan Lake region.*

Actions: Redesign the amphitheatre area which is inadequate to meet the existing demand during the summer season.

Develop improved signage plan of park features, regulations, and general information as part of an overall site plan for the park.

Provide cultural linkage in programming with First Nations traditional use of the area.

Improve the existing information board near the boat launch with updated information on park use-ethics, boating safety, water ethics, and lake/boating regulations. Information on other recreational boating sites on Cowichan Lake should also be provided.

Provide information on natural, cultural and recreation features of the Cowichan Valley. Improve communication and develop an information plan with the assistance of local clubs, area residents, Cowichan Valley Regional District, Ministry of Forests, Cowichan Valley School District and Lake Cowichan Tourism Bureau.

Other Activities

Objective: *To provide a variety of outdoor recreation activities in Gordon Bay Provincial Park.*

Actions: Develop additional hiking trails to surrounding special features which may be added to the park at a later date.

Evaluate whether mountain bicycle trails along old logging roads outside the park could be developed and connected to existing park trails and roads.

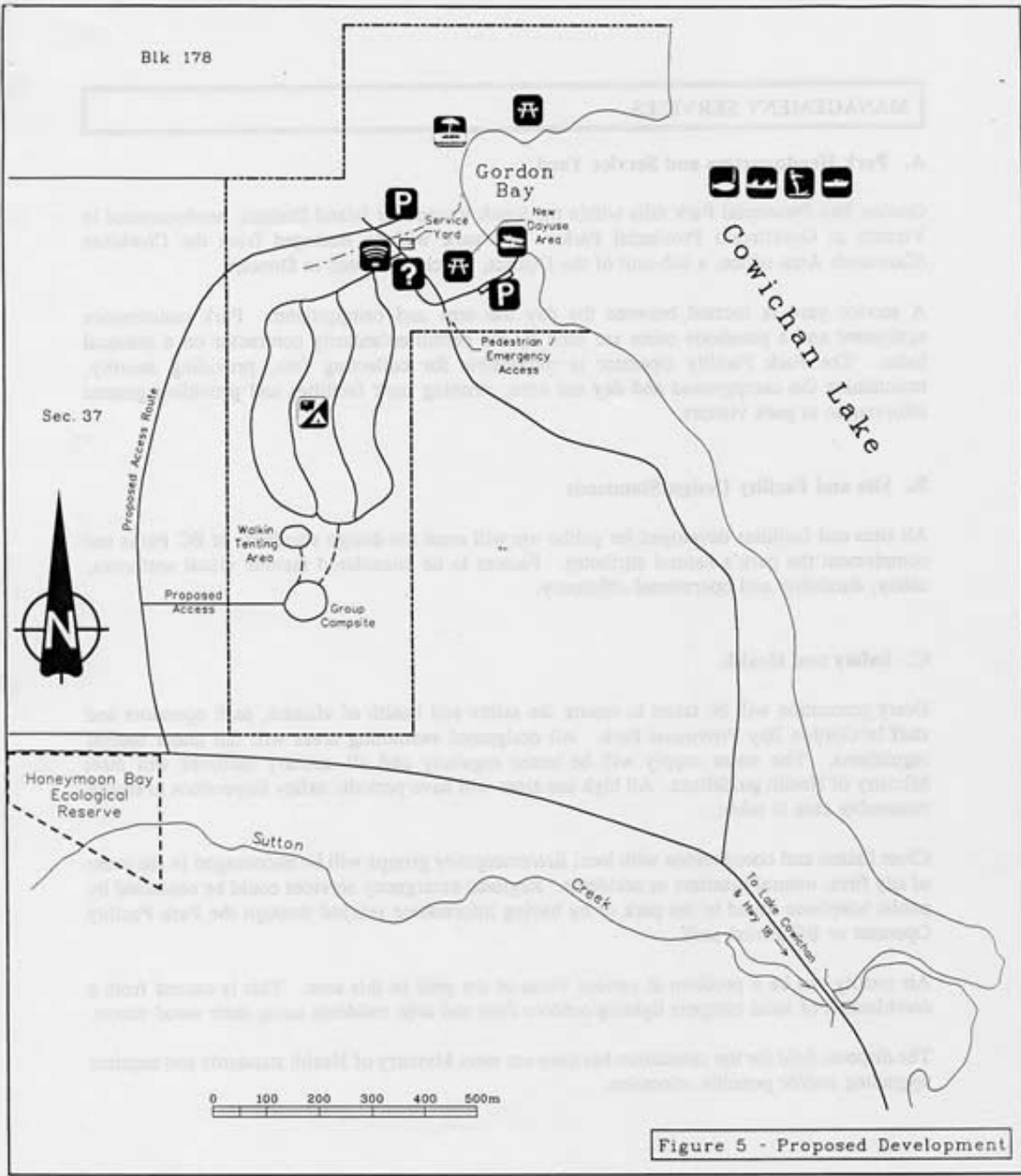


Figure 5 - Proposed Development

MANAGEMENT SERVICES

A. Park Headquarters and Service Yard

Gordon Bay Provincial Park falls within the South Vancouver Island District, headquartered in Victoria at Goldstream Provincial Park. This park will be managed from the Cowichan /Carmanah Area office, a sub-unit of the District, which is located in Duncan.

A service yard is located between the day use area and campground. Park maintenance equipment and a panabode cabin are used by the permittee/security contractor on a seasonal basis. The Park Facility Operator is responsible for collecting fees, providing security, maintaining the campground and day use area, cleaning park facilities and providing general information to park visitors.

B. Site and Facility Design Standards

All sites and facilities developed for public use will meet the design standards of BC Parks and complement the park's natural attributes. Factors to be considered include visual aesthetics, safety, durability and operational efficiency.

C. Safety and Health

Every precaution will be taken to ensure the safety and health of visitors, park operators and staff in Gordon Bay Provincial Park. All designated swimming areas will fall under federal regulations. The water supply will be tested regularly and all sanitary facilities will meet Ministry of Health guidelines. All high use areas will have periodic safety inspections to ensure reasonable care is taken.

Close liaison and coordination with local fire/emergency groups will be encouraged in the event of any fires, natural disasters or accidents. Regional emergency services could be contacted by public telephone found in the park or by having information relayed through the Park Facility Operator or BC Parks' staff.

Air quality can be a problem at various times of the year in this area. This is caused from a combination of local campers lighting outdoor fires and area residents using their wood stoves.

The disposal field for the sanistation has does not meet Ministry of Health standards and requires upgrading and/or possible relocation.

Actions: Relocate and rebuild sanistation in the park and/or encourage local government, in partnership with other agencies, to build a centrally located facility in the Cowichan Valley to service the area.

Monitor daily use of the sanistation.

Reduce campfire and smoke pollution in the campground through sound conservation practices, restricted campfire burning periods, public messages and better quality wood burned.

D. Volunteer Services

Through the years, volunteers have been invaluable to the quality of services and facilities experienced in provincial parks. Gordon Bay Provincial Park could utilize the valuable efforts of volunteers even more than they are at present. Interpretive media, naturalist displays, special events, signs, trail building, special clean-ups, campground hosting, boating facilities and more could be enhanced through the use of volunteers.

Actions: Continue to encourage volunteer groups to build trails, participate in education and interpretive programs, provide information to park visitors on a variety of topics and undertake special projects.

Participate more directly in the community and with corporate sector to encourage more voluntarism and partnerships in the park.

PHOTOGRAPH NOT AVAILABLE

PROMOTION AND INFORMATION PROGRAM

Introduction:

Gordon Bay Provincial Park is over 100 percent capacity in both the campground and day use area during the peak summer months. Naturally, weather plays a factor but usually there are line ups to get into the campground and the beach is very congested with local users, campers and boaters who enjoy all the amenities found in this park.

Nearly one half of the park users at Gordon Bay are return visitors. This high percentage of repeat customers is a contributing factor to the promotion of the park as they spread the word to friends and relatives. Families with young children are the largest category of user groups to both camp and enjoy the beach area.

A. Access Strategy

Highway 18, which leads to Gordon Bay also leads outdoor enthusiasts to the main road access for the Carmanah and Walbran valleys. The establishment of the Cowichan River Provincial Park and potential additions within Cowichan Lake and the new Carmanah Walbran Provincial Park will also attract more recreationists to this region.

Actions: Discuss and review options for a new alternative access through Sec. 37 to the park. The old access route would be blocked off at the park boundary and used for pedestrian and emergency vehicle traffic only.

B. Information Strategy

The information strategy for Gordon Bay Provincial Park is to emphasize ecological systems and processes and encourage environmental ethics and educate the public on recreational and environmental safety issues. Information shelters are located at the park entrance, boat launch day use area, amphitheatre and campground. In addition, there is an in-park handout, park host program and interpretive program which promotes activities within the park and those nearby.

This park has one of the most successful interpretive programs in the province with audiences regularly reaching 150 participants. Themes relate to local flora and fauna, outdoor ethics, survival and orienteering. Summer programs are directed at children due to the large number of young families that camp in the park.

Actions: Continue to promote interpretive programs offering a variety of activities both in the park and in the region. Themes for these programs will focus on natural and

cultural regional history (ie. mining and logging); ecology; plant, fish and animal conservation; recreation; and First Nations' history and development.

Extend interpretive programs into the shoulder seasons and help to promote "off season" vacationing and additional recreation opportunities. The amphitheatre is also underutilized in the shoulder season and strategies should be implemented to increase its use during this period.

Encourage private eco-tourism companies to utilize the park during the shoulder season.

Coordinate with the local school board and municipality that use of the park is suitable for field classes, environmental studies and recreation courses.

Emphasize park use ethics and park hazards at information shelters.

Promote day trips to other areas in the Cowichan Valley.

Provide the unique opportunity to educate the large number of families who visit Gordon Bay Park on changing provincial ministry objectives (ie. air and water quality, recycling, wilderness ethics, biotic conservation etc.).

Evaluate Gordon Bay Provincial Park as a candidate for implementing a campground reservation system due the park's consistent overflow situation.

C. Marketing and Promotion

Existing promotion of Gordon Bay Provincial Park is through regional BC Parks maps and park brochures. An "In Park" handout is also available for the use of all park visitors. Local Chamber of Commerce and Tourism outlets in Duncan and Lake Cowichan/Youbou also promote and provide general park and regional recreation information.

Gordon Bay Provincial Park is usually at an overflow capacity during the summer season. Due to limitations on campground size and day use/beach area there is relatively little area to expand. Therefore, this park needs to promote its low or shoulder season such as spring and fall rather than its high use period.

Actions: Encourage the Facility Operator to cooperate with local business (ie. golf course and boat rental) to implement a shoulder season vacation package in order to attract more park visitors.

Continue to promote the park through regional BC Parks maps and brochures and local area information through an updated "In Park" handout.

Promote "Special Events" that are held on the shoulder seasons.

Develop a group campground to accommodate school groups etc. during the school season for outdoor education purposes.

Continue annual orientation of local travel information centres of the many natural and recreation features associated with Gordon Bay and other provincial park.

PHOTOGRAPH NOT AVAILABLE

Introduction:

This section compiles all of the actions listed throughout the master plan and lists them in order of priority. Implementation of these actions is dependent on the availability of BC Parks' financial and staff resources and will be affected by the needs of the rest of the BC Park system and the South Vancouver Island District. Approval of this plan does not constitute automatic approval of funding for implementation. In addition, BC Parks may have to seek corporate, community or interagency partnerships to implement many of these plan actions.

Prioritizing of the main resource and visitor management proposals is necessary to effectively implement this five to ten year management plan. The following outline lists the proposed actions in three sections: Highest Priority Actions; Task or Project Oriented Actions; and Ongoing and Monitoring Actions. The first highlights a few crucial actions that are of the highest priority and require attention within the near future.

The second list highlights the actions that require a specific task or project. Park managers will review this to plan for upcoming budgets and annual work plans for staff. This is broken down into Resource Management actions and Visitor Services actions.

The third list describes the actions that require on-going or monitoring types of tasks. These will be regularly reviewed by park managers to ensure that on-going tasks are being carried out and that the spirit and intentions of this master plan are being followed. These are also placed within Resource Management actions and Visitor Services actions.

HIGHEST PRIORITY ACTIONS

- Formalize discussions with John Hancock Resource Group representatives options for purchase, exchange or donation of portions of their holdings contiguous to Gordon Bay Provincial Park that have high recreation and conservation values.
- Initiate discussions with Ministry of Forests and Lands Branch the addition of crown lands adjacent to the park in order to provide additional recreational opportunities and enhance the visual aesthetics of surrounding park lands.
- Discuss with Ministry of Forests and Lands Branch the addition of crown lands across the lake surrounding Bald Mountain. This area has excellent shoreline and upland recreation opportunities and provides an important visual backdrop to Cowichan Lake.

- Prepare a management plan for Honeymoon Bay Ecological Reserve and determine its future role in relation to Gordon Bay Provincial Park.
- Recommend that a Recreation Management Plan be initiated by Cowichan Valley Regional District for the Cowichan Lake area with participation by private forest companies, Ministry of Forests, BC Parks, CVRD etc.

TASK OR PROJECT ORIENTED ACTIONS

NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES MANAGEMENT

Land:

- Review with other provincial, municipal and private agencies proposed land use planning for the Cowichan Lake area.

Vegetation:

- Develop a vegetation management plan and undertake an inventory of the more unusual plant species, especially located in the Special Features Zone.

Water:

- Existing sanistation must be either upgraded or relocated in order to ensure provincial health standards are adequately met.

Wildlife:

- Develop a wildlife inventory and management plan with input from other government agencies and the local community.

Cultural:

- Undertake a heritage inventory (liaise with Heritage Conservation Branch) of the park and proposed park addition areas.

Relationship with First Nations:

- Define, in conjunction with First Nations, traditional activities found in the Cowichan Lake and Valley areas.

- Discuss with First Nations in Lake Cowichan and Duncan methods and appropriate ways in presenting native history of the Cowichan region, as part of the interpretive program, to park visitors.
- Consult with relevant First Nations' representatives about any proposed additions to Gordon Bay Provincial Park.

VISITOR SERVICES MANAGEMENT

Outdoor Recreation Opportunities:

- Discuss and review alternate access options through Sec. 32 for both the day use area and campground to help to eliminate vehicle congestion and improve access for emergency vehicles.
- Redesign and/or relocate existing sanitation.
- Prepare an overall site plan for the park and include:
 - new access, campground and group campground layout design
 - redevelop day use area and add complementary facilities such as playground, meeting place, amphitheatre, picnic sites etc.
 - expand and improve existing beach area
 - develop "boater's beach" area
 - redesign existing day use parking lot
 - new facilities and access will meet physically challenged standards
 - design informal camping/tenting area in the park
- Extend existing boat ramp and construct small floating wharf adjacent to the ramp; improve existing information board near boat launch.
- Develop a group campground to accommodate school groups etc. during the school season for outdoor education purposes.
- Provide new viewing sites at higher elevation vantage points should lands acquired immediately to the west and north be added to the park.
- Add cold water showers for swimmers in day use area.
- Redesign existing amphitheatre in campground to accommodate users and add tarp covering to provide shelter from rain.

- Develop additional hiking trails to surrounding special features and complete "Point Trail".

Information Strategy:

- Develop an information plan with the assistance of local clubs, area residents, Cowichan Valley Regional District, Ministry of Forests, Cowichan Valley School District and Lake Cowichan Tourism Bureau in order to provide information on the natural, cultural and recreation features of the Cowichan Valley.
- Evaluate Gordon Bay Park as a candidate for implementing a campground reservation system.
- Develop a signage plan for park features, regulations and general information as part of an overall site plan for the entire park to meet BC Parks' standards.

ONGOING AND MONITORING ACTIONS

NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES MANAGEMENT

Land:

- Evaluate provincial forests and crown lands surrounding Mt. Bald for recreation and scenic values and consideration as future park additions.

Vegetation:

- Implement a revegetation program, as part of the vegetation management plan, to replace dead and diseased trees in the park.

Water:

- Ensure that all sanitary facilities are properly designed, located and monitored to meet public health standards.
- Monitor water quality in the campground once per month and keep records of any regional (CRVD) or provincial water testing in the park.
- Ensure that contaminants do not enter any streams in the park.

- Work closely with Ministry of Environment to enhance and protect creek streams and shoreline fish habitat in the park.

Wildlife/Fish:

- Continue the existing policy of no hunting in the park.
- Work closely with Ministry of Environment to enhance and protect creek streams and shoreline fish habitat in the park.

Visual:

- Discuss with Ministry of Forests implementation of their Visual Quality Objectives for visually sensitive areas near or across the lake from the park including the lands immediately to the northwest and crown land in the vicinity of Bald Mountain.

VISITOR SERVICES MANAGEMENT

- Manage recreation use in conjunction with the park's zoning plan so that outdoor recreation features and natural resources will be minimally affected.
- Evaluate whether mountain bicycle trails along old logging roads could be developed and connected to the park.
- Continue to encourage volunteer groups to build trails, participate in education and interpretive programs, provide information to park visitors on a variety of topics and undertake special projects.
- Participate more directly in the community and with corporate sector to encourage more voluntarism and partnerships in the park.

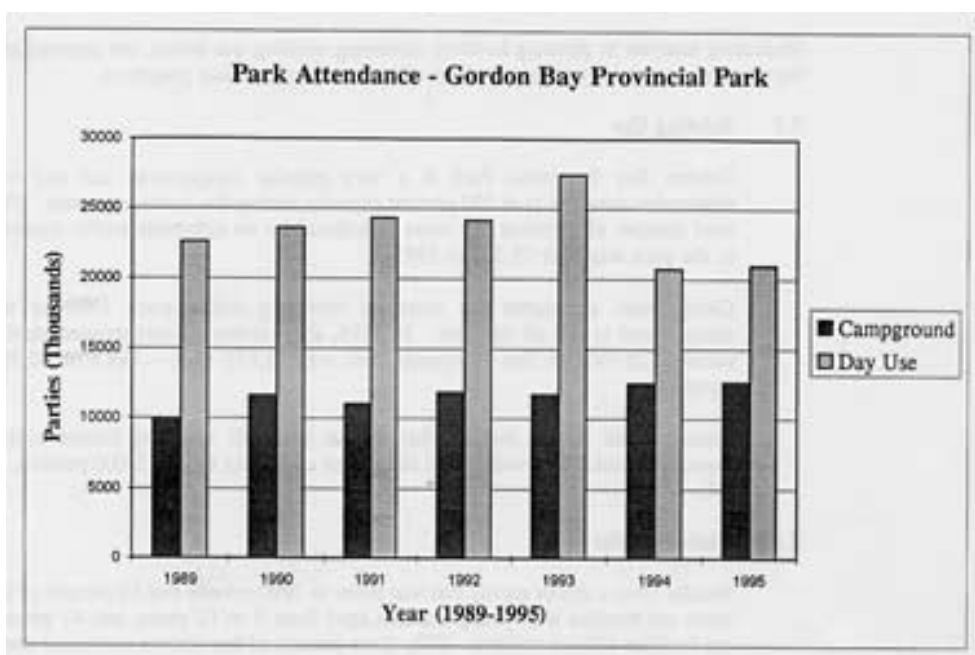
Information Strategy:

- Continue to provide interpretive programs offering a variety of activities both in the park and in the region.
- Provide safe boating literature, speed restriction regulations and information on other destination boating areas in Cowichan Lake.
- Provide public with information on water conservation/wilderness use ethics and park hazards.

- Provide public with information on Swimmer's Itch for public health purposes as required.
- Coordinate with the local school board and municipality that use of the park is suitable for field classes, environmental studies and recreation courses.
- Promote the unique opportunity to educate the large number of families who visit Gordon Bay Park on changing provincial ministry objectives.

Promotion:

- promote park visitation during the shoulder season by:
 - extending interpretive programs in spring and fall
 - promoting park for field classes, environmental studies and recreation courses to local school district and communities
 - promoting "Special Events"
 - encouraging the Park Facility Operator to work with local businesses to promote Gordon Bay Park as a fall vacationing destination.
 - encouraging private eco-tourism companies to utilize the park during the shoulder seasons.
- Continue to promote the park through regional BC Parks maps and brochures and local area information through an updated "In Park" handout.
- Continue annual orientation of local travel information centres of the many natural and recreation features associated with Gordon Bay and other provincial parks.



APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Provincial Park System Goals - BC Parks 1990

The British Columbia Provincial Parks System has two mandates: to conserve significant and representative natural and cultural resources and to provide a wide variety of outdoor recreation opportunities.

CONSERVATION GOALS:

- Goal 1** Protection of representative ecosystems. The Provincial Park System will include areas that are representative of the natural ecosystems of British Columbia, thereby protecting and presenting, for posterity, the characteristic combinations of flora, fauna, landforms and waters associated with this diverse province.
- Goal 2** Protection of Outstanding Special Features. The Parks System will contain a wide scenic selection of the best provincial outdoor recreation resources, natural features, wilderness areas and historic resources of British Columbia.

RECREATION GOALS:

Goal 1 Outdoor Recreation Holiday Destination Opportunities

The Provincial Parks System will include appropriate outdoor recreation lands and facilities providing for the use and enjoyment of major outdoor recreation destinations in British Columbia.

Goal 2 Tourism Travel Route Opportunities

The Provincial Parks System will include, as a complement to other suppliers, outdoor recreation lands and facilities in association with major provincial travel corridors to ensure that travelling vacationers are supplied with a basic network of scenic stopoffs.

Goal 3 Regional Recreation Opportunities

The Provincial Parks System will include, as a complement to other suppliers, land and facility-based opportunities for outdoor recreation distributed in association with British Columbia's natural geographic regions in order that British Columbians are assured a basic supply of outdoor recreation services close to home.

Goal 4 Backcountry Recreation Opportunities

We want to build the province's reputation for backcountry recreation by protecting and managing our most outstanding wilderness areas. Some sites may feature adventure tourism, while in other areas the wilderness would remain untouched.

APPENDIX B

BC Parks Zoning Policy

Below are descriptions of the various zones that can be applied in provincial parks. The lists of activities and facilities shown for each zone indicate what could occur and not necessarily what must occur. In many parks, only a few of the activities or facilities shown in the list would occur.

INTENSIVE RECREATION ZONE:

Management Objective

- * To provide for a variety of high-use, readily-accessible, facility-oriented outdoor recreation activities.

Activities

- * Camping, picnicking, beach activities, power-boating, nature appreciation, skiing, fishing.

Facilities

- * May be intensely developed, e.g., campgrounds, play areas, interpretive buildings, boat launches.

NATURAL ENVIRONMENT ZONE:

Management Objective

- * To provide for a variety of easily-accessible off-road outdoor recreation activities in a largely undisturbed natural environment.

Activities

- * Walk-in camping, kayaking, cross-country skiing, horseback riding.

Facilities

- * Moderately-developed, e.g., trails, wilderness/boating campsites, shelters.

SPECIAL FEATURE ZONE:

Management Objective

- * To protect and present significant natural or cultural resources, features or processes because of their special character, fragility and heritage value.

Activities

- * Sight-seeing, interpretation and study of history and nature.

Facilities

- * May be developed for feature interpretation purposes.
- * May be subject to temporary closures or permanently restricted access.

WILDERNESS RECREATION ZONE:**Management Objective**

- * To provide for backcountry recreation in a remote natural environment, with emphasis on a wilderness atmosphere.

Activities

- * Backpacking, river rafting, fishing, hunting, nature appreciation.

Facilities

- * Development limited to user convenience and protecting the environment, e.g., trails, primitive campsites, shelters.
- * Mechanized access may be allowed to specific points.

WILDERNESS CONSERVATION ZONE:**Management Objective**

- * To protect a remote, undisturbed natural landscape and provide backcountry experiences based on a pristine environment where no motorized activities will be allowed.

Activities

- * Backpacking, river rafting, fishing, nature appreciation.
- * NO hunting and NO mechanized access allowed.

Facilities

- * No development.

APPENDIX C

Gordon Bay Provincial Park Background Report

GORDON BAY PROVINCIAL PARK BACKGROUND REPORT

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Gordon Bay Provincial Park is located on the west side of Cowichan Lake, north of Honeymoon Bay and approximately 35 kilometres west of Duncan via Highway #8. This popular destination-oriented Class "A" provincial park, comprising approximately 49 hectares, was established on September 19, 1969. Representative of the Coastal Western Hemlock biogeoclimatic zone, Gordon Bay has both a developed campground and day use area and offers excellent opportunities for a variety of recreation activities.

1.1 REGIONAL AND PROVINCIAL CONTEXT

Gordon Bay Park lies within Electoral Area "F" of the Cowichan Valley Regional District. The surrounding area is predominantly mountainous and forest covered to the west of the Village of Lake Cowichan, whereas to the east, extensive tracts of flat land exist along the Cowichan River.

In addition to Gordon Bay Provincial Park there are a number of other provincial and regional parks in this area that also provide a variety of recreation opportunities. Many of these parks have special features and natural resources that will be preserved for future generations. Provincial parks include Cowichan River, Carmanah Pacific, Chemainus River and Koksilah River. Community parks include Mesachie Ball Park, Bear Lake Park, Honeymoon Bay Park and Lily Beach Park. In addition, there are approximately ten Ministry of Forests Recreational sites and both British Columbia Forest Products Co. and Western Forest Products also provide campsites.

PHOTOGRAPH NOT AVAILABLE

2.0 NATURAL RESOURCES

2.1 Climate

The Cowichan Lake area climate varies widely from season to season. Being within a maritime climatic zone, the area usually experiences warm, dry summers and mild, wet winters. On average only 14,2 cm of snow will fall between late October and March. Quite often the area will experience no snowfall from one year to the next. Over 85 percent of the annual rainfall occurs between October and April with December being the wettest month. Precipitation levels increase dramatically the further west one travels. Humidity is highest during the winter rainy season and lowest in the summer.

July is the sunniest month with 235 hours and August is the warmest with a mean average temperature of 25 degrees Celsius. The mean July and August temperature is 17.2 degrees Celsius and the mean annual temperature is 9.4 degrees Celsius. Located in the centre of Vancouver Island away from the moderating marine influence, it is not unusual to see temperatures exceed 30 degrees Celsius.

Like temperatures and precipitation, the wind velocity also changes from location and season. During the summer very gentle breezes are the norm throughout the central Cowichan Valley. However, adjacent larger lakes such as Nitinat Lake experience strong wind velocity especially during the day which does not subside until after dusk. On a few occasions in November and December the area can experience very violent and sudden wind storms that seem to funnel through the Cowichan Valley.

This climate, in conjunction with other significant physical attributes in the area, creates ideal conditions for a variety of recreational activities.

2.2 Hydrology

Gordon Bay Park is situated on Cowichan Lake, the largest waterbody on southern Vancouver Island. In addition, two of the Cowichan Valley's major rivers, the Cowichan and the Chemainus, flow through the settlement area, as do all the tributaries of the Lake's watershed. A number of smaller waterbodies also lie within the Cowichan Valley and include Beaver Lake, Fairservice Lake, Mesachie Lake and Bear Lake.

The Cowichan Valley is directly dependent on available precipitation to replenish the area's rivers and groundwater supplies. The summer months are characterized by reduced stream flows and falling groundwater levels. Owing to the British Columbia Forest Products weir at Lake Cowichan, the Cowichan River's discharge is regulated to guarantee a more constant flow during these dry summer months.

Cowichan Lake, at 163 metres above sea level plays an important role in the region. It provides the water supply for the Village of Lake Cowichan as well as for numerous residents around the lake. Industrial concerns draw water for immediate use and also use

the Lake for the storage of raw materials. The Lake contributes greatly to the area's overall scenic appeal, while generating varied recreational opportunities. Streams draining into Cowichan Lake provide the water supply for communities such as Youbou and Honeymoon Bay and habitat for fish and wildlife.

2.3 Physiography

There are two distinct topographical regions in the Cowichan Lake area – the mountainous areas and lowland valleys. The uplands area is the largest of the two regions and forms part of the Insular Mountain Belt. The lowland area extends east along the Cowichan River from the Village of Lake Cowichan and is composed of a flat, narrow, tongue-shaped valley. It forms part of the westernmost extension of the Nanaimo Lowlands, a section of the largely submerged Georgia Depression.

Running through the length of Vancouver Island are the Insular Mountains. At 1345 metres, Heather Mountain is the highest peak north of Cowichan Lake while in the Seymour Range, south of the lake, Towinicut Mountain at 1260 metres is the highest point.

Two prominent valleys are within the area - the Cowichan and Nitinat. The Cowichan Valley was occupied by a valley glacier or ice tongue which moved eastward during the latter stages of the glaciation. Kettles and kame topography are found in the middle and lower reaches of the Cowichan River. It flows southeast for approximately 42 kilometres to Cowichan Bay. Cowichan Lake at 163 metres above sea level is one of Vancouver Island's largest lakes and most important fresh water body on southern Vancouver Island. The community water supply for the Village of Lake Cowichan comes from the lake.

The Nanaimo Lowlands, the raised portion of the Georgia Depression, extend inland as far as the Village of Lake Cowichan. The upper reaches of the Cowichan Valley is mantled with till as a result of the wasting of the last major ice age. This includes extensive sand and gravel beds up to 30 metres thick, and pockets of silts and clays. The mountains on the north side of the lowlands rise gently away from the valley floor to about 800 metres (Hill 60 Range) while to the south steeper slopes are encountered closer to the river rising to between 600 and 800 metres.

In addition to these main topographical features it should also be noted that the Chemainus River has its headwaters around El Capitan Mountain and Mount Landalt northwest of Youbou while the Gordon River drains much of the western interior of the Cowichan Lake Region flowing south to Port San Juan.

2.4 Vegetation

The area surrounding Gordon Bay Provincial Park lies within the Coastal Western Hemlock Biogeoclimatic Zone as a result of the wetter west coast climate and more mountainous terrain. The tree species in this area include western hemlock, amabilis fir, yellow cedar, sitka spruce and lodgepole pine; the shrubs false aralea, devil's club, oval

leaf whortleberry, salal and Alaskan, evergreen and red huckleberry; and the flowers bunchberry, queen's cup, trailing rubus, alpine marigold, foam flower and twisted stalk.

A mixing of coniferous and deciduous trees takes place in the lowest and driest areas, where western hemlock, broad-leaf maple, arbutus, Pacific dogwood and Douglas fir are the main species. Shrubs include salal, Oregon grape, red huckleberry, dwarf rose, Saskatoon berry and false boxwood. Vanilla leaf is a common flower specie.

2.5 Soils

There are two major soil types surrounding Gordon Bay. As a result of the steeply sloping topography the north and west areas are dominated by unclassified mountain soils which are very thin and stony and have variable drainage. Exposed bedrock is also common. Despite these limitations, these rough, mountainous lands are extremely productive for commercial timber production.

The southern portion of the park lie within the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR) and has soils of the Chemainus series which are considered to have the highest agricultural capability. These soils are highly fertile because they are well supplied with organic matter and nitrogen and have a good moisture holding capacity. However, these soils are confined to the lower reaches of Meade Creek and the Robertson River and the area between Gordon Bay and Honeymoon Bay.

2.6 Wildlife

The Cowichan Valley has a great variety of wildlife and is an excellent area for nature viewing. There are a number of mammal species found in this area that are only common to Vancouver Island while many well known species of the adjacent mainland are notably absent. Resident or transient mammals include the Black bear, raccoon, marten, mink, river otter, beaver, cougar, Roosevelt elk, Columbian Blacktail deer, shrews and moles, bats, Vancouver Island marmot and Red squirrel. Introduced species include rats, house mice, muskrats, foxes and feral rabbits.

An extensive concentration and variety of birds are found in the Cowichan Valley. This area can generally be said to be of rural nature with small pockets of urban development. These local concentrations of human population have in many cases increased the bird life by creating a more suitable habitat for many species. The lakes and wetlands provide excellent habitat for waterfowl while the dry ridges are home to several species of raptors. Many species of songbirds and other migratory birds are also found in the Cowichan Valley area. The valley and surrounding hillsides provide excellent habitat for many insect species. Neighbouring gardens and sunny slopes offer attractive areas for a variety of butterflies. In addition, moths, dragon flies, beetles, grasshoppers, bees, ants, black flies, mosquitoes and other small insects reside in this area.

3.1 Heritage Resources

Two major history themes are important in this unit: native history and logging. Native history is significant in the area since it contains the largest reserve on Vancouver Island and was in the past a major settlement area. Much of that settlement was a result of the significant salmon streams in this area of the island.

The first local native bands who came to hunt and fish on "Kaatza", the lake were probably of the Cowichan tribe. No permanent settlements were established in this region as the forests were too dense and travel too difficult but summer camps and wandering tribes regularly visited the area. Cowichan Lake was a meeting place and used as a "gap" between the Indians of the Nitinat and their nearest Cowichan neighbours at the mouth of the Cowichan river.

It is reported that the first white hunters or prospectors who found their way to "Kaatza" came in the late 1850's. The first authentic record was from a surveying expedition who in 1857, under the instruction of Governor Douglas, set out from Cowichan harbour to cross Vancouver Island to the Nitinat. Much of the interest by these early explorers was to find gold and other quality minerals. Their reports indicated that small quantities of gold were found in a few river creeks but it was the magnificent stands of prime Douglas fir and yellow cedar that would provide the wealth and cause the area to develop later.

By the early 1900's logging had become the major industry and promoter of development in the Cowichan Lake area. Until the construction of an E & N line to Cowichan Lake in 1913, logs were transported from the lake to the east coast via "sluicing" along the Cowichan River. The area started to change rapidly as more logging companies purchased timber rights and settlers cleared the land. A number of man-made fires started in logging camps caused major forest fires and the pristine landscape soon disappeared.

Situated in south central Vancouver Island, the Cowichan Valley also was one of the early areas of importance to the logging industry due to its inherent natural forest values. Forestry has traditionally been the lifeblood of Cowichan Lake communities and almost exclusively used until the mid 1950's by three logging companies for hauling, booming and storing logs. E. and N. Railway Company still own the lake bed which assisted the logging companies in maintaining exclusive rights to boom off good recreational beaches and over some of the best fishing waters.

Several old mines are located on the hills overlooking Cowichan Lake. None of these are in operation today and most shafts have been blocked off.

Gordon Bay Provincial Park is located near the community of Honeymoon Bay. This settlement, since the 1930's had the second largest mill on the lake. However through a

combination of declining timber resources, an aging sawmill and a prolonged period of weak market conditions, the Western Forest Products sawmill closed in 1981. The company townsite at Honeymoon Bay still remains intact today and the community has continued even with current low levels of employment in the forest industry. The Gordon Bay area, along with the entire Cowichan Lake area, is growing as a residential and retirement location because of its inherent scenic values and full range of lake-based and upland recreational activities.

4.0 RESOURCE ANALYSIS

The most significant aspect of a park's resources and features are their potential to serve the goals of the park system and to fulfill the purpose that which it was designated. Gordon Bay contributes to achieving the conservation and recreation goals of the British Columbia Parks System (Appendix).

4.1 CONSERVATION GOAL SIGNIFICANCE

i) Natural Landscape Representation

The landform and vegetation associated with Gordon Bay Provincial Park are typically representative of the Leeward Island Mountains Ecoregion and Coastal Western Biogeoclimatic Zone. Some interesting plant species are found in the park and the popular Honeymoon Bay Ecological Reserve, offering spectacular spring displays of wildflower and unique flora, is located nearby.

ii) Protection of Outstanding Scenic Features and Recreation Settings

Gordon Bay Provincial Park is situated on Cowichan Lake and offers a wide variety of recreational activities. The lake is the area's major scenic feature though the surrounding mountains, streams and proximity to Nitinat Lake and the Carmanah also offer excellent outdoor opportunities for recreationists.

4.2 RECREATION GOAL SIGNIFICANCE

i) Regional Recreation

Gordon Bay Provincial Park lies on the west side of Cowichan Lake near the village of Honeymoon Bay. Located only 35 kilometres from Duncan via Highway 18 passing through the town of Lake Cowichan, this is a popular family-oriented destination park for Southern Vancouver Island and regional area residents. The demand for more outdoor recreation facilities and opportunities in this region is growing and new provincial parks such as the Carmanah and Cowichan River along with local and regional parks will help to meet this demand.

5.0 TENURES, OCCUPANCY RIGHTS AND JURISDICTION

Leases and Permits:	Campground Operations Permit
Fee Simple Holdings:	None
Forest Tenures:	None
Water Rights:	None
Rights-of-Way:	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. BC Hydro 20 metre wide transmission line easement (Plan #1015R) authorized under Mines Right-of-Way Act.2. Cowich Copper Mine Road 11 metre wide, in accordance with Mines Right-of-way Act, approved January 26, 1953.
Mineral Claims:	None
Trespasses:	None
Statutory Jurisdiction	None
Inholdings:	None
Foreshore Leases:	None
Trapping:	None
Guiding and Outfitting	None

6.0 RECREATION OPPORTUNITIES/EXISTING FACILITIES

Gordon Bay Provincial Park provides a variety of day use recreational opportunities in addition to a destination campground. This relatively small park comprising 51 hectares is nearly fully developed. A 130 unit campground along with a developed beach/day use area, boat launch, sanistation, walking trails, amphitheatre, telephone, sanitary facilities and numerous information signs are located in this popular park.

The day use parking area has a capacity for 120 vehicles and boat launch offers additional parking for 45 vehicles and trailers. There is a 240 metre developed sandy beach with secured booms to separate the swimming area from boaters. Over 40 picnic tables are scattered throughout the day use area along with fire circles and a water system.

A number of private campgrounds, trailer parks, motels, Forest Service sites and municipal parks are found in the Cowichan Lake area. Other provincial parks in the region include Carmanah Pacific, Cowichan River, Bamberton, Chemainus River, Koksilah River and Shawnigan Lake offering camping and day use recreation opportunities.

Table

Recreation Facilities/Opportunities within Cowichan Valley Regional District*

Agency	Location	No. of Parks	Size (ha.)
BC Parks	CVRD	Eleven	520 plus
Forests	CVRD	Ten	N/A
MOTH	CVRD	Sixteen	N/A
Municipal	Village of Lk. Cowichan	Ten	78.88
	City of Duncan	Four	29.4
	North Cowichan	Thirty-three	507.0
Community Parks	Electoral "D"	Five	3.725
	Electoral "E"	Seven	37.63
	Electoral "F"	Four	8.96
	Electoral "I"	Four	27.23
Regional	Crofton	One	25.0

*Source: Community Parks Inventory, 1992. Cowichan Valley Regional District.

7.0 MARKETING ANALYSIS

Marketing analysis in planning involves reviewing existing use levels, use patterns and the demand to provide a measure of the effectiveness of existing programs.

7.1 Existing Use

Gordon Bay Provincial Park is a very popular campground and day use destination area that is at 100 percent capacity during the summer months. The total number of recorded day users (calculated by an automatic traffic counter) in the park was over 73,500 in 1995.

Campground attendance has remained relatively stable since 1990 as the campground is full all summer. In 1995, the number of campground parties recorded at Gordon Bay Provincial Park was 12,623 (Jan. - Oct.) or 40,394 campers.

Recorded use figures indicate that due to its small size and limited visitor capacity, Gordon Bay with a total attendance exceeding over 115,000 persons, is full.

7.2 Visitor Profile

Results from a visitor survey that was taken in 1990 reveals that 59 percent of the users are families with young children aged from 5 to 12 years; and 41 percent are families without children. Fifty-three percent of the visitors are repeat users who reside mainly in southern Vancouver Island. Of those visitors staying overnight, the average length of stay is 3 nights with 68 percent staying between 2-4 nights.

7.3 Demand

Between 1989 and 1993, Gordon Bay Provincial Park averaged about 121,590 visitors each year. Since then both day use and campground attendance has decreased by 1.2 percent. These attendance figures suggest that the popularity of Gordon Bay have leveled off as the park nears maximum summer capacity.

Visitors have commented favorably on the park's interpretive program, cleanliness of both facilities and campground and the natural lake side setting. Complaints usually focus on waiting in line for a campsite, congestion in the beach area and not enough activities.